

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 EAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4011

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL FUKUOKA

AMCONSUL NAHA

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL OSAKA

COMUSAPAN YOKOTA

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 17935

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: ELECTION SETBACK FOR LDP

SUMMARY. RESULTS OF 1976 ELECTION FOR 511 LOWER HOUSE
SEATS INDICATE THAT VOTERS, WHILE DELIVERING SHARP SET-
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BACK TO CANDIDATES SPONSORED BY JAPAN'S RULING LIBERAL

DEMOCRATIC PARTY--BOTH FOR ITS PERCEIVED CORRUPTION AND UNSEEMLY LEADERSHIP STRUGGLE--REJECTED RADICAL ALTERNATIVES AND OPTED FOR CENTRIST YOUTHFUL ALTERNATIVES. MOREOVER IF, AS IS EXPECTED, CONSERVATIVES INDEPENDENTS AFFILIATE WITH LDP, ITS MAJORITY IN HOUSE SEEMS ASSURED. IT MAY, HOWEVER, REQUIRE COOPERATION--WITH A PRICE-- AT THIS POINT PRESUMABLY FROM NLC EFFECTIVELY TO ASSURE CONSERVATIVE CONTROL OF ALL COMMITTEES. LDP ELECTION DEFEAT COULD WELL MEAN RESIGNATION OF PRIMIN MIKI, POSSIBLY WITHIN NEXT WEEK OR SO. HIS REPLACEMENT BY LEADING FRONT-RUNNER FUKUDA, WHO MAY HAVE TO SHARE SOME OF BLAME FOR ELECTION DEBACLE, IS IN DOUBT, HOWEVER, AND THERE IS SPECULATION ABOUT OTHER CANDIDATES. IN OUR VIEW, ELECTION RESULT DOES NOT APPEAR TO REFLECT ON US-JAPAN RELATIONS, SPECIFICALLY SECURITY TREATY. ONLY PARTY THAT WENT OUT OF WAY TO MAKE US-JAPAN RELATIONS AN ISSUE, JCP, WAS ROUNDLY DEFEATED. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING IS EMBASSY'S PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF DECEMBER 5 LOWER HOUSE ELECTION. BY FAILING TO GAIN 256 SEAT MAJORITY, JAPAN'S RULING LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (LDP) SUFFERED A DRAMATIC DEFEAT. SETBACK DID NOT, HOWEVER, BENEFIT TRADITIONAL OPPOSITION INASMUCH AS JSP MANAGED BARELY TO HOLD ITS OWN AND JCP LOST OVER HALF ITS SEATS. BENEFICIARIES WERE CGP, NEW LIBERAL CLUB, DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS AND INDEPENDENTS (MOSTLY CONSERVATIVE). FINAL RESULTS, ANNOUNCED LATE AFTERNOON DECEMBER 6, AS FOLLOWS:

	SEATS	PERCENT VOTE	SEATS	PERCENT VOTE
	1976	1972		
LDP	249	41.78	271	48.02
JSP	123	20.69	118	21.90
CGP	55	10.91	30	8.46
DSP	29	6.28	19	6.98
JCP	17	10.38	38	10.49
NLC	17	4.18	0	--
IND	21	5.70	14	3.88

(DISCREPANCY IS FOR MINOR PARTIES.)

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2. WHILE LDP STRENGTH IN LOWER HOUSE WILL DECLINE, EXPECTED AFFILIATION WITH LDP OF SOME 12-14 CONSERVATIVE INDEPENDENTS AND COOPERATION OF TWO FORMER LDP DIETMEN UNDER LOCKHEED INDICTMENT, SHOULD ASSURE LDP OF OBTAINING WORKING MAJORITY AND ENABLE IT TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT. IT WILL BE FACED WITH RAZOR-THIN MAJORITY, HOWEVER, AND SEVERELY RESTRICTED ABILITY TO GET THROUGH CONTROVERSIAL LEGISLATION. ABSOLUTE CONTROL OF LOWER HOUSE, INCLUDING

ALL LOWER HOUSE COMMITTEES, MAY REQUIRE COOPERATION FROM NLC--OR OTHER OPPOSITION PARTY--DIET MEMBERS, FOR WHICH LDP WILL HAVE TO PAY A PRICE.

3. ELECTION IS CLEARLY A BLOW TO PRIMIN MIKI AND HIS HOPES OF REMAINING IN OFFICE. MOST BELIEVE IT IS ONLY MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE IS FORCED TO RESIGN, BUT MAGNITUDE OF LDP DEFEAT WILL PROBABLY MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR FRONT-RUNNING FUKUDA TO ESCAPE SOME RESPONSIBILITY, AND HE MAY, THEREFORE, BE OUT OF RUNNING AS WELL. NEXT SEVERAL DAYS WILL SEE REPEATED ROUND OF INTRA-PARTY CONSULTATIONS AND ATTENDANT CONFUSION WHICH COULD RESULT IN OUTSIDER SUCCEEDING MIKI; MIYAZAWA AND MAEO ARE TWO POSSIBILITIES, BUT OHIRA MAY BE BACK IN RUNNING IF FUKUDA IS AS BADLY DAMAGED BY ELECTION RESULT AS APPEARS AT PRESENT.

4. PREDICTABLY, MEDIA HAS ATTRIBUTED LDP DEFEAT TO VOTERS' HARSH JUDGMENT ON CONSERVATIVE CORRUPTION AS SYMBOLIZED BY TANAKA'S "MONEY POLITICS" AND LOCKHEED SCANDAL. LOCKHEED HAS INDEED TAKEN ITS TOLL, BUT SO ALSO HAS LDP LEADERSHIP SPLIT AND RESULTANT FAILURE OF LDP TO LIMIT CANDIDATE NUMBERS IN AREAS WHERE CONSERVATIVE SUPPORT WAS ALREADY AT LIMITS. DEFEAT OF LARGE NUMBER OF LDP ELDERS, INCLUDING THREE INCUMBENT CABINET MINISTERS--MAEDA, OUCHI AND AMANO--IS A BLOW TO MIKI AND EVIDENCE OF VOTERS' DISGUST WITH "POLITICS AS USUAL" AND DESIRE TO FIND CLEAN, YOUTHFUL CANDIDATES.

5. IN TWO PRESS CONFERENCES DECEMBER 6, PRIMIN MIKI ACCEPTED RESPONSIBILITY FOR "UNEXPECTEDLY HARSH" JUDGMENT OF PEOPLE ON LDP, SAYING IT NOW HIS DUTY AS PRIMIN AND LDP PRESIDENT TO SET PATH FOR LDP RECONSTRUCTION. HE CITED TWO REASONS FOR LDP DEFEAT. FIRST WAS ABSENCE OF
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ELECTION FOR FOUR YEARS DURING WHICH SEVEN MILLION NEW VOTERS WERE ADDED TO ROLLS; THEY HAD SAID "NO" TO BOTH EXTREMES AND WERE APPARENTLY SEEKING NEW DIRECTIONS IN POLITICS. SECOND, LOCKHEED, CONTRARY TO SOME OPINION, HAD HAD ADVERSE IMPACT AS PEOPLE PASSED JUDGMENT ON POLITICAL CORRUPTION AND ABSENCE OF LDP CONTRITION. MIKI DUCKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS OWN FUTURE AND THAT OF PARTY, SAYING HE WOULD HAVE TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH PARTY LEADERSHIP AND ALL PARTY MEMBERS. HE SAID WORKING ARRANGEMENTS WITH OTHER PARTIES AND DIET MANAGEMENT WOULD "REQUIRE THOUGHT," BUT ADDED THAT YOHEI KONO'S NEW LIBERAL CLUB (NLC) WAS CLOSEST TO LDP IN THINKING. CONCLUDING, MIKI ACCEPTED BLAME FOR LOSS OF LDP MAJORITY, BUT REITERATED QUESTION WAS NOW HOW TO REACT CONSTRUCTIVELY.

6. WHILE JSP GAINED FIVE SEATS OVER 1972 RESULTS, DEFEAT OF FOUR FACTIONAL LEADERS (KATSUMATA, EDA, YAMAMOTO, AND SASAKI) HAS DEALT PARTY MODERATES SERIOUS BLOW AND WILL STRENGTHEN HANDS OF SOCIALISM ASSOCIATION IN FUTURE PARTY DELIBERATIONS, POSSIBLY DRIVING PARTY FURTHER TO LEFT.

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7. CGP PICKED UP GROUND IT LOST IN 1972 WHEN IT LOST SEVENTEEN SEATS. ITS VICTORY CAME LARGEMLY, WE SUSPECT,

AT EXPENSE OF JCP AND WAS BASED ON ITS APPEAL TO YOUTH,
ITS CLEAN IMAGE AND FACT THAT IT PROVIDED MODERATE
ALTERNATIVE TO JCP FOR PROTEST VOTERS.

8. DSP BENEFITTED LIKEWISE FROM ITS CLEAN, RELATIVELY
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YOUTHFUL AND MODERATE IMAGE. IT HAD ALL-OUT BACKING THIS
TIME OF DOMEI LABOR FEDERATION, WHICH HAS GAINED RAPIDLY
VIS-A-VIS SOHYO IN KEY PRIVATE SECTOR INDUSTRIAL FIELD.

9. JCP'S DEFEAT AT POLLS APPEARS PARTLY DUE TO READJUST-
MENT OF SHARE OF SEATS WITH CGP, BUT ALSO TO FACT THAT
DSP, NLC AND INDEPENDENTS APPARENTLY PROVIDED MORE
ATTRACTIVE, LESS RISKY ALTERNATIVE FOR VOTERS. DESPITE
PARTY'S EFFORT TO ESTABLISH A "CLEAN" IMAGE,
REEMERGENCE OF MIYAMOTO "LYNCH" SCANDAL MAY HAVE SCARED
SOME VOTERS AWAY.

10. NEW LIBERAL CLUB CANDIDATES APPEAR TO HAVE OFFERED
VOTERS EXACTLY WHAT THEY DESIRED. THEY WERE RELATIVELY
YOUTHFUL AND WELL-KNOWN TO THEIR CONSTITUENCIES. THEY
STOOD FOR MODERATION, WERE UNTainted BY LDP SCANDALS,
AND ABOVE ALL, CONSERVATIVE.

1. OF TWENTY-ONE INDEPENDENTS ELECTED, SEVEN ARE
UNLIKELY TO JOIN LDP; THREE WERE SUPPORTED BY OPPOSITION
PARTIES, TWO (INCLUDING FORMER LDP DIETMAN UTSUNOMIYA)
ARE MODERATE INDEPENDENTS, AND TWO, FORMER PRIMIN TANAKA
AND HASHIMOTO ARE FORMER LDP MEMBERS UNDER INDICTMENT
FOR LOCKHEED, (TANAKA WAS RETURNED WITH 168,500 VOTES,
MOST OF ANY CANDIDATE IN ELECTION). REMAINDER ARE
CONSERVATIVES, MOST OF WHOM WILL PROBABLY AFFILIATE WITH
PARTY. CONSERVATIVE INDEPENDENTS ALSO PROVIDED ELECTORATE
WITH VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO OLDER CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATES.

12. ANALYSIS OF PRELIMINARY PERCENTAGES OF POPULAR
VOTE, AND NUMBER OF SEATS RECEIVED BY EACH PARTY DOES NOT
INDICATE ANY GREAT SWING AWAY FROM CONSERVATIVE
POLITICIANS. IN FACT, A ROUGH CALCULATION OF VOTES GAINED
BY LDP, NLC, AND CONSERVATIVE INDEPENDENTS WOULD INDICATE
A SLIGHT INCREASE. A REALIGNMENT OF BOTH
CONSERVATIVES AND OPPOSITION APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE
WITH GENERAL TREND AWAY FROM THE RIGHT AND LEFT AND
TOWARD MORE MODERATE -- AND YOUTHFUL -- CANDIDATES.

13. ALLOWING FOR NUMEROUS COMBINATIONS AND PERMUTATIONS
IN VOTING PATTERNS, ONE INTERPRETATION, REFLECTING MUCH
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OF ABOVE ANALYSIS, IS TO SEE ELECTION IN TERMS OF THREE SETS OF TRADE-OFFS, EACH REFLECTING THE PUBLIC'S PREFERENCE FOR FRESH LEADERSHIP, CLEAN IMAGE, AND CENTRIST, MODERATE VIEWS. FIRST TRADE-OFF, WITHIN CONSERVATIVE RANKS, TOOK FORM OF SHIFT FROM LDP TO NLC AND CONSERVATIVE INDEPENDENTS. PRELIMINARY FIGURES INDICATE TOTAL CONSERVATIVE POPULAR VOTE INCREASED SLIGHTLY COMPARED WITH 1972, AND ONE REASON CONSERVATIVES DID NOT OBTAIN EVEN MORE SEATS, AS THEY NORMALLY WOULD IN MULTI-SEAT CONSTITUENCY SYSTEM, WAS THAT ADDITIONAL CANDIDATES RUNNING UNDER NLC LABEL PREVENTED BETTER PARTY MANAGEMENT OF CONSERVATIVE VOTE. SECOND TRADE-OFF WAS WITHIN CONSTITUENCY THAT HAS TRADITIONALLY REPRESENTED ROOTLESS FAMILIES, ESPECIALLY IN LARGE CITIES, AND SEGMENT OF POPULATION THAT FEELS LEFT OUT. TOTAL NUMBER OF SEATS FOR CGP AND JCP, TAKEN TOGETHER, CHANGED VERY LITTLE (FROM 67 IN 1972 TO 72), BUT THERE WAS SHARP SHIFT IN PREFERENCE OF THIS CONSTITUENCY FOR CGP. THIRD TRADE-OFF IS NOT AS APPARENT AND FAR MORE DIFFICULT OF FLOAT, INASMUCH AS BOTH JSP AND DSP SEATS INCREASED. TWENTY ADDITIONAL SEATS AT STAKE IN 1976 ELECTION, HOWEVER, WERE MOSTLY IN LARGE CITIES, WHERE SOCIALISTS DRAW HEAVIEST SUPPORT, AND IT IS, THEREFORE, POSSIBLE TO SAY THAT DSP PERFORMED RELATIVELY BETTER IN ATTRACTING ITS SHARE OF TOTAL SOCIALIST-MINDED VOTE. TO BE SURE, LDP LEADERSHIP SQUABBLES, LOCKHEED, ECONOMIC SITUATION, ETC., ALL HAD INFLUENCE IN BRINGING ABOUT TRADE-OFFS, BUT ABOVE INTERPRETATION WOULD SUGGEST NET EFFECT OF ELECTION WAS NOT A REFLECTION OF CHANGE IN FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL INCLINATIONS OF ELECTORATE BUT LATTER'S DESIRE TO SEEK NEW, FORWARD-LOOKING REPRESENTATION. TRADE-OFF CONCEPT IS AT THIS STAGE SOMEWHAT IMPRESSIONISTIC AND DOES NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT SIZABLE FLOATING VOTE. ADDITIONAL LIGHT SHOULD BE SHED ON CONCEPT THROUGH CLOSER ANALYSIS OF RETURNS, BUT AT MINIMUM IT WOULD APPEAR THAT GROSS NUMBERS OF VOTERS IN EACH OF THREE CONSTITUENCIES NOTED ABOVE REMAINED REMARKABLY CONSTANT.

14. ELECTION RESULTS DO NOT APPEAR TO REFLECT IN ANY MAJOR RESPECT ON US-JAPAN RELATIONS IN GENERAL OR
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SECURITY RELATIONSHIP IN PARTICULAR. US-JAPAN RELATIONS WERE NOT ISSUE IN CAMPAIGN AND PARTY MOST VOCIFEROUSLY OPPOSED TO CLOSE US COOPERATION, JCP,

SUFFERED RESOUNDING DEFEAT.
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